1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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The affair got wind, and it was everywhere reported 539
that Sätir of Begiriv had found a treasure. The news finally reached the ears of the Pasha of Van, who sent for him and shut him up in the city prison, where he lay some time. He confessed the truth, and obtained his liberty only at the price of a quantity of gold, which he gave to the Pasha of Van. In short, Sätir had to scatter his gold in all directions.

Sensible folks will, perhaps, doubt the truth of this story. It is, however, firmly believed in these districts, and often related, and, what is more, the descendants of Sätir still live at Begiriv in great prosperity. They have lands, mills, many a yoke of oxen and fine flocks, and they keep open house. One might say that it is a *tekkeh*,[1] for every one receives hospitality in this Armenian house; Moslems even are never repulsed, but welcomed with every mark of attention. From that time Sätir became well known among the Kürds, who made great friends with him, and brought him presents of sheep. It sometimes [579 happens that they are at feud with the inhabitants of 628] Begiriv, and commit robberies and depredations in 778] that town, but they always spare the house of Sätir, saying that it is as sacred as a *tekkeh*, and that not even an indiscreet glance must enter it.

The following curious story has been preserved by 538
the late Mr. Rich,[2] who took it down literally from 114
the lips of the narrator, a tribesman of the Bebbehs of Darishmani, without, as he says, adding to or

[1] Dervish monastery, where hospitality is generally exercised.
[2] *Narrative, &c.*, vol. i. p. 291.

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

533 altering it in any way. The incidents it describes are
●114 totally unlike those of Kürdish stories generally, and are probably derived from real occurrences, but belonging to a date far anterior to that assigned by the story-
[176] teller, who, with the supreme disregard for accuracy manifested by persons of his calling in the East, would refer any remarkable story to the immediate ancestors of the favourite Kürdish hero, Suleiman Baba, if he could not refer them to the hero himself without being convicted of a too glaring anachronism. It may possibly be a survival of some story of chivalry belonging to the crumbling age of Saladin, whom the Kürds declare to have been a prince of their race.

A parallel to this legend may also be found in the
[177] Greek folk-tale of Ἡ βασίλισσα ποὺ πάγαινε στὸν πόλεμο, "The Princess who went to the War."[1]

The Maiden Champion.

537 There lived once in Darishmana two brothers, Fakih Ahmed and Khidder, who had suffered much from the hostility of the Bultassis, the most powerful people of Pishder. Fakih Ahmed, who was of a bold and proud spirit, quitted his village in disgust, swearing never to return to it unless he should be in a position to avenge himself. He went to Constantinople, and entered the service of the Sultan.

It so happened that the Sultan was at that time at war with the English (or Franks). In those days battles were generally decided by single combat. A champion had come forth from the Frankish host

[1] Von Hahn, Neugriech. Märchen, p. 37; and Absolon, i. p. 114.

Abstract

ROWANDUZ: A KURDISH ADMINISTRATIVE
AND MERCANTILE CENTER

by William M. Masters

This study has two purposes, the first of which is an analysis and interpretation of the culture of Rowanduz, a Kurdish administrative and mercantile town of northern Iraq. In carrying out this purpose, it is necessary to make reference to wider cultural horizons in Iraq and the Middle East. On the other hand, inasmuch as detailed, localized treatments of the Kurds have not been previously attempted, this study of Rowanduz is able to contribute to the ethnology of the Middle East. The Kurds are a Muslim people numbering several millions, who inhabit the mountainous region where the frontiers of Iraq, Iran, Russia, Syria, and Turkey meet. The second purpose of this study is the delineation of the impact of the modern state on the structure of the society of the town and the district within which it lies. The materials were obtained from seven weeks' intensive investigation in the summer of 1951.

An analysis and interpretation of the culture of Rowanduz are presented in six areas of discussion: 1) the administrative center, 2) the mercantile center, 3) house, dress, and diet, 4) the society, 5) the family, 6) religious life. The population of the town numbers about 5000 and is basically made up of merchants,

[p. i(a)]

PREFACE

This study is the result of work undertaken while the investigator was a member of the University of Michigan 1951 Expedition to Iraq and Iran. He must first express his gratitude to the director of the expedition, Professor George G. Cameron, and to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research for having made this inquiry possible. The investigator lived in the town of Rowandum, a Kurdish administrative and mercantile center in northern Iraq, for a period of seven weeks in the summer of 1951, a large part of this time as a guest in the home of a Kurdish merchant. He was accompanied by an interpreter, a former employee of the intelligence service of the British Army, and the facility with which much of this information was gathered can be attributed to the ability and ingenuity of this person. The investigator is well aware of the shortcomings which can arise from the use of an interpreter and the brevity of a visit. In the first regard, however, the repetition of inquiries and the retranslation of recorded narratives to the townspeople revealed that a considerable degree of accuracy in this medium was being obtained. The teachers of the town's schools offered additional corrections and amplifications. There is still, of course, the possibility of error, but the investigator feels that mistakes must be few in number, not only because of the ability of his

interpreter and communicate, but because he found little which seemed strange or anomalous with relation to his studies of other Islamic cultures. The second failing is more annoying and the deficits in information arising from this difficulty have been indicated from time to time in the text. Nevertheless, it is felt that the limited aims of this undertaking, discussed in the initial and concluding chapters, have been achieved. The investigator was fortunate in having a plurality of informants, men of various ages and callings, with whom narratives could be rehearsed. Their services were volunteered, and the only compensation asked was a similar exposition, by the investigator, of life in the United States. The information was recorded in many places in the town, the homes, the shops, the gardens, the club, and the mosque, and supplemented by a photographic record.

The investigator must next note his deep appreciation for the aid afforded him by the governing of Ramadan, Sami 'Ali Beg, and Mr. Mahmud al-Amin of the Iraq Museum who facilitated his relationship with the local government. He is also obligated to H. E. Najji al-Asil, Director-General of Antiquities, under whose auspices the expedition conducted its work. A great debt is acknowledged to Professors Leslie A. White, Miasha Titiev, and Arthur R. R. Busk of the University of Michigan for their guidance in the preparation of the manuscript and the incisive exposition of its problems. Both Professors George G. Cameron and Douglas E.

Army of the University's expedition have continued to express 114
of hospitality and inspiration. Gratitude must be expressed
to Professor E. Harbury Allmann and Mr. Ernest H. Dobbins
of the University of Michigan, the former for his help in
checking the points related to government administration
and the latter for a careful review of the foreign words
and phrases. Lastly, it remains to thank the townspeople
of Hawassina and their mukhtar, Ra'if Amin al-'Akhsat, for
their friendship and generous hospitality without which
this investigation would have been impossible. It is hoped
that a study of their life and problems will in some way
repay them for their kindness.

Words from Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish, and other 129
languages have been underscored in the text, but account 104
words have been omitted. The reader will find in the
appendix a glossary of these words in complete transcription.

Georgians and Muslim Circassians. In addition to being inhabited by those noted for their humanity, this country has been the meeting place of empires and cultural traditions, in the latest centuries those of the Arabs, Persians, and Turks. The Kurds, because of their numerical strength, emphasis on arms, and religion, fared far better in the upheavals of the First World War than some of their Christian neighbours.

By "Kurd" one has reference to an ethic unit or nation whose most distinctive characteristics are its language and customs. Coupled with these are a large number of minor peculiarities which differentiate it from other Islamic peoples. Kurdish culture as a whole, however, is an amalgam in which the more recent influences of the Arab, Persian, and Turk are easily discernable and many things, such as orthodox religious practices, may be assigned definite historical origins. Despite the abundance of foreign elements, Kurdish life has its own distinctive form. The history of the Kurds has not been satisfactorily explored, and those few treatments which have appeared are, for the most part, disappointing, for they have been written by persons whose aims were far from academic or whose scholarship is doubtful. Without entering the controversies which surround the antiquity of the nation, the Kurds seem to appear first in classical literature as the Kardouchi of Xenophon and the Gordyaei of Strabo, a mountain people occupying much the same area as they do today.[1] Their

[1]Driver, 1922, pp. 491-493.

language is Indo-European, closely related to Persian, and they were probably a part of that same movement which brought others of the Indo-European linguistic group, such as the Armenians, Hittites, and Persians, into the Middle East. Racially it is difficult to give an opinion, because little work of a modern nature has been undertaken among them. In the older parlance of physical anthropology, however, they exhibit traits considered much more characteristic of the races of Europe and Central Asia than of the Arabs to the south, such as blond hair, blue eyes, fair pigmentation, and round heads. They give immediate evidence, by these older criteria, of being a mixture. In religion they are Sunnite Muslims and are thus set off from the Shiite Iranians to the east. Whether this is the result of their original conversion or the continued influence of the Sunnite Turks and Turkomans is unknown.

Ethnologically almost no systematic investigations have been made among the Kurds, although a few brief, but accurate, generalized descriptions are to be found.[1] These last, however, have been written by persons, administrators, missionaries, travelers, and the like, who are not ethnologists. This, in itself, need not constitute a detriment, but their primary purpose in publication was not the portrayal of a culture. It is unnecessary to review here the large number of other types of references to the Kurds, extending from ancient times to the present, except to remark that their most distinctive characteristic is their prejudice

[1]For example, May, 1921.

against this people and, in many instances, their ignorance or mendacity. This may be seen from one of the more recent complaints:

> Some of them are farmers and shepherds, but most of them are robbers. If a Kurd has not killed six or seven men, he is not respected and considered worthy to live. My father once told me a story he heard from one of the Kurdish chiefs. He said he had a son who was very bashful, and this was considered quite a disgrace, for one of these chiefs is always made leader in case of war. It would also be impossible for him to marry one of the best girls unless he was a successful thief and robber. He carries with him a gun and a sword, and no matter how bloody or evil the deed he commits may be, it only adds respect and honor to his name.[1]

The sanguine reputation is not wholly without reason. In older times the Kurdish chieftains were not above plundering expeditions from their mountains and in recent years have proven incorrigible revolutionists, for reasons which will be considered in this study. This has not endeared them to their co-religionists among the Arabs, Iranians, and Turks. Secondly, many Kurds served in the Hamidiye, the irregular bodies of reactionary troops organized by the Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid to crush incipient liberal and nationalistic movements in the tottering Ottoman Empire, and the Armenians and other Christians who suffered from their depredations, as well as missionaries and spokesmen in Europe, have been loud in their denunciation of the Kurdish nation as a whole. Lastly, the blood feud and brigandage are well known in Kurdistan itself. The first is not concerned with outsiders, but acts to emphasize a bloodthirsty reputation, and the

[1]Soane, 1913, p. 193.

around was the diversion of some of the chieftains at the expense of commercial travelers who, of course, had reasons to complain of the tolls exacted from them. It is ridiculous, however, to suppose that the Kurds as a body are a race of muleteers and thieves.

An investigation of Kurdish life, the first object of this study, has value, not simply because the people have so often been maligned, but for the reason that the ethnology of the Middle East, a field which has only recently begun to receive adequate attention must be built up from accurate, localized descriptions. If broader analyses of contemporary Islamic culture are to be undertaken, as well as historical studies, they demand a body of data which admits of verification, the work of observers whose motives are scientific, rather than the loose aggregation of anecdotes and generalizations one has to deal with at present. One may profitably study Kurdish life, because it has been almost untouched so far as primary observation is concerned and, as the culture of a non-Arab people whose language and background is Indo-European, an inquiry into the effect of Islam in modifying its formation would not be without regard. One may properly seek to present those elements which may be proven to be unique with the Kurds and those others which may be attributed to the influences of Islam and other peoples. It is convenient here to mention the recent monograph of E. R. Leach, Social and Economic Organization of the Rowanduz Kurds, which, with the exception of some studies made many years

ago and published in Russian by V. F. Minorsky, unavailable to the investigator, seems to be the first attempt to deal in systematic fashion with the people themselves.[1] Leach's study, however, is brief and neglects a number of aspects of life, for example, the ceremonies surrounding birth, circumcision, marriage, and death, of which treatment would be desirable. Secondly, the "Rowanduz area" in Leach's work includes a wide region of investigation ranging from Erbil to the Iranian frontier and, with a few exceptions, his remarks cannot be referred to a particular village or town. Lastly, he was primarily concerned with the agricultural villages and has little to say about the town of Rowanduz itself.

In addition to a primary, comprehensive description of Kurdish life, a second problem, of importance to the ethnology of the Middle East as a whole, is almost forced on one. The first facet of this is the question of Kurdish nationalism, the repercussions of which have recently directed a great deal of popular attention to this group. Nationalism, which requires no new definition here, is a variant of ethnocentrism. In its best known contemporary forms it evolved in Europe during the last two centuries. The nation, in such thinking, is differentiated from others by criteria, often highly fictional, of race or culture. The goal of nationalism is the realization of an autonomous state. In this it achieves a political aim, but its real

[1]Leach, 1940.

and representatives of the same nation, totalling several millions, are held by in Iran, Syria, and Turkey. There is some excuse for apprehension as there have been no less than six armed Kurdish rebellions, some common to several of the four governments involved and quelled with difficulty, in the past twenty-five years. As in the case of most of the populations, the royal family of Iraq is Arab and the language of government is Arabic. The spectre of Kurdish nationalism strikes terror in the hearts of government officials, and there is little love lost between Arab and Kurd. Many of the Kurds regard the Arabs as unlawful rulers, at the same time according them for the poverty and filth to be found in southern Iraq. "Are you an Arab?" a Kurdish man or woman often challenges a dirty child of the village, "Go wash yourself." On their part, the Arabs, particularly those of the upper classes, following the tradition of Ibnaghon, regard the Kurds with a mixture of fear and disgust. "Why do you waste your time with those people?" the investigator was asked by an Arab official, "they are all bandits." In spite of these things, there is no bar to intermarriage between the two groups, and any Kurd can rise to great prominence in the government service, although he is a priori under suspicion. In 1951 two of the fourteen provinces in Iraq were directed by Kurdish governors, and the command of the army unit at Kirkuk was for a time given to a Kurdish staff officer.

In addition, there is a certain amount of rivalry between persons of different provinces or cities, for

ought God to bring destruction to the owner. In the case of smaller articles, it is more or less mandatory for the owner to present the item in question to the admirer as a gift. A large number of cigarette-lighters, pencils, walking-sticks, and the like change hands in exactly this fashion. The second is much more muted, the exhibition of deference to a superior or an equal. This can be seen in two persons of equal standing who wish to enter a room, for they will stand before the door, bowing each other in, until one seizes the other by the arm and makes him precede by main force. The same is true of refreshments or tobacco. If one official produces cigarettes, the second will bring out his own and a struggle usually ensues until there is an exchange. An identical process is gone through in lighting the tobacco, often with grotesque attitudes as two men hold out lighted matches for each other's cigarettes. The Kurdish populace, aristocrats and commoners, are less punctilious in these matters than the officials, and suffer less inconvenience.

To this point the greater part of these remarks have been largely pertinent to masculine society alone, and the investigator confesses to some failing in treating that of women. There are, it seems, certain aspects of feminine society on which the townsmen themselves cannot speak with authority, a deficit of information which could easily be filled by an observer of the female sex. However, it is possible to make a number of valid observations which must

specialist and which can provide the material for broader analyses of the economics, society, or religion of the Middle East. The value of investigation undertaken in a particular town or locale is obvious. Too often the student of the ethnology of the Middle East is forced to glean his information from the chance remarks and anecdotes of administrators, missionaries, and travelers. If such a writer happens to comment on the wedding customs of one village, and, several pages later, notices the funeral rites of another, one cannot legitimately infer that marriage and burial are the same in both villages. A body of this type of material exists for the Kurds themselves, but it has not been thought necessary to have reference to it. One cannot take some engineer or missionary to task for an observation, seemingly incorrect, which cannot be identified with reference to a definite locale, nor does there appear to be much value in noticing their occurrence. The dangers of generalization are marked, for example, Driver, who notes:

> Kurdish women are comparatively free to come and go as they like; they are wooed and won by open courtship, for in almost all tribes they are unveiled.[1]

This statement, as has been seen for Rowanduz, is not valid. It has also been felt that a detailed comparison of life in Rowanduz with that of other groups in the Middle East would be worth little, for the student has at his disposal comprehensive, localized treatments only of the Arab Bedouin, the Egyptian peasantry, and certain peoples of North Africa.

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[1]Driver, 1922, p. 302.

The most productive comparisons would be with the Turks or the Persians, but, unfortunately, no such monographs are as yet available. To utilize the scanty and widely scattered materials on Turkish or Persian life would be at best haphazard. This study of Rowanduz, with certain exceptions, stands by itself, in the belief that it will afford accurate data for the comparative treatments of the future.

Something of the context of Kurdish life, as observed in Rowanduz, has been presented. It has been seen that the town dominates, partly in an administrative and partly in a commercial way, a large agricultural district. The bulk of the townspeople are merchants, craftsmen, and servants who depend for their livelihood on commerce with the villagers and the patronage of government personnel. The basis of the town's importance is both economic and political. Life within the household, the structure of society, and religion have been treated. What is perhaps of great importance is the ample demonstration that the Kurds are not savages devoid of culture, that they are not all "robbers" and need not "kill six or seven men" in order to be respected. With the exception of revolts and blood feuds, the district is relatively peaceful and normally one is rarely in danger of molestation. The old brigandage, carried on largely by the chieftains as a lucrative diversion, was directed against commercial travelers who could protect themselves from it by the simple expedient of making "gifts" in advance. A district population of some fifty thousand

FATHER'S BROTHER'S DAUGHTER MARRIAGE IN KURDISTAN

FREDRIK BARTH

[1] THE PREVALENCE of patrilateral father's brothers' daughter marriage in the Middle East, and its association with Islam, has frequently received comment. Yet no clear picture of the possible structural implications of this form of patrilateral marriage has emerged, nor of the actual distribution and frequency of the practice. The present paper attempts to analyse the relationship between the Kurdish form of segmentary lineage organization and this marriage pattern.

[2] Any short of unilineal descent in a stable or expanding population constitutes a sorting system where succeeding generations in many lines tend to be larger and more inclusive than the preceding. It is this short, generally in compressed form, which is utilized to organize a descent group in the form of a segmentary lineage organization. This organizational form was named by Gifford and later by Firth, who called it a "lineage," and later analysed fully by Evans-Pritchard.[1] Recent work on this type of organization has been lucidly summarized by Fortes.[2]

[3] In almost all the lineage systems described in the literature, the lineage, or the clan of which it is a part, is an exogamous group. This fact of exogamy has important implications, e.g. for the development of dispersal clans and consolidation of a "daughter's son" relationship as a motivation for granting foreign lineages in the dominant lineage of an area (as described for the Nuer), and it is further frequently reflected in the whole construction of kinship terminology.[3]

Lineage exogamy is, however, an essential feature of lineage systems. We may say that the marriage pattern in a population may be, a strict short of unilineal descent offers an equally clear framework on which a segmentary lineage organization may be based. In a patrilineal system, matrilineal ties may be regarded as totally irrelevant to the political relations of segments and whole lineages—marriage partners may, as to speak, be "liberated" from their role in defining the relations between political groups. This lack of association of lineage organization and exogamy is common among Semitic and Iranian tribes of the Middle East,

1 E. W. Gifford, *Miwok Lineages and the Political Unit in Aboriginal California* (American Anthropologist, vol. 28, pp. 389-401, 1926); Raymond Firth, *We, the Tikopia* (London, 1936), E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: Folk and Clan* (Sudan Notes and Records, 1935-1935), and *The Nuer* (London, 1940).

2 Meyer Fortes, *The Structure of Unilineal Descent Groups* (American Anthropologist, vol. 55, pp. 17-41, 1953).

3 F. Eggan, *Social Organization of the Western Pueblos* (Chicago, 1950).

3: Barrett K-9 (1981) 1984 MA.11 Rand MA.11

and in the same area possibly also among some Caucasian groups.[4] However, although marriage payments do not function to define the relations between lineages, they does not exclude that marriage relations and payments also have indeed an relevance of a structural or specifically political nature. The present paper presents an hypothesis regarding these implications in the Kurdish lineage organization, specifically the meaning of a payment of father's brother's daughter marriage, for the consideration of students working with similar problems in the Middle East.

Portions of Kurdish culture and society have been described elsewhere,[5] but might be summarized briefly. The Kurds are a linguistic and ethnic group, nearly exclusively Moslem by religion, totalling some three million people.[6] They occupy a semi-continuous territory along the hills and mountains east and north of the Fertile Crescent, divided between the modern states of Persia, Iraq, Turkey, the U.S.S.R., and Syria. Some few groups of Kurds have remained nomadic till the present day, following their herds of sheep, goats, and large cattle into the mountains in the summer and down on the plains in the winter. The great majority are today subsistence farmers, many of whom practice a pattern of localized transhumance. The present discussion relates to the southern districts of Iraq Kurdistan, where material was collected in the field from February to August, 1961.

Two basic types of organization were found: a tribal system, based on descent, and a feudal system, based on class and land ownership. The latter is progressively becoming assimilated into the modern structure of the state of Iraq; the former, a patrilineal lineage system, survives only among the nomads and a minority of the farmers in the more isolated territories.

Kurdish tribal organization is a segmentary lineage organization of very simple type. The largest kinship unit, the tira, is a maximal lineage, divisible into segments according to the charter of patrilineal descent. The genealogical depth of the tira varies. For the sedentary Hamawands (location: Kirkuk Liwa, Iraq), the apical ancestor is nine generations removed from the present adult generation; for the nomadic Warde Shami (location: summering in Sulaimani Liwa, Iraq), twelve generations.

Several tira may be united, though not necessarily, in a political confederacy of variable endurance, the most important in southern Kurdistan being at present

4 Lucy J. Lockwood, Marriage and the Family in Caucasia (Vienna, 1952).

5 V. F. Minorsky, "Kurds and Kurdistan" (in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, London, 1913); E. B. Leach, Social and Economic Organization of the Rowanduz Kurds (Monographs in Social Anthropology, no. 3, London, 1940); Frederik Barth, Principles of Social Organization in Southern Kurdistan (Universitetets Etnografiske Museum, Bulletin no. 7, Oslo, 1953).

6 The Middle East (Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1958).

3: Barth E-9 (1961) 1964 MAII Hard MAII
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Subtribe	Total marriages within tribe	Known unrelated co-villagers	With strangers	Total
23 13.5%	89 52.7%	42 25%	113 67.5%	264

There is some suggestion that clan endogamy has similar factional implications in this situation as lineage segment endogamy has in the Kurdish system, but that the emphasis centers on the opposition between co-resident clans—whereas the the segment between 23 percent marriages within own clan vs. 25 percent with unrelated co-villagers, in a village where four major and six smaller clans are resident. Yet Gluckman pushes the standard explanation: " . . . marriage with the father's brother's son is preferred to any other marriage in order to preserve a stronger ultimate possession of the property and inheritance of the family."[12] This view though less explanatory is further weakened by the fact that few villagers do not observe the proper Koranic rule[13] of giving half male and female relatives of the same degree a share of inheritance, in the proportion 2:1— " . . . even if it be seldom that a man dies without leaving any sons, yet the possibility allows it as far as no other marriage between the children of brothers is equally desirable."[14]

Chagnon and Cove offer a theoretical analysis of parallel cousin marriage, with special reference to the Bedouin[15] which, if I have understood their argument correctly, emphasizes the incompatibility of a subordinate son-in-law relation to a wife-relative with a system of strong political and economic identification with the lineage segment—in this case sons as component of father, son, and father's brother. This incompatibility is then resolved by a pattern of establishing the son-in-law relationship with the father's brother, through marriage with a father's brother's daughter. This appears as a rather round-about way of avoiding the problem from the point of view developed here; but their discussion indicates that the present viewpoints are not inapplicable to this marriage pattern among the Bedouin.

The points of view expressed above might be summarized briefly. As contrasted to most African systems, marriage patterns among the Muslim peoples of the Middle East are liberated from their role in expressing the relations between segments of a larger lineage system. The potential relevance of these patterns to social structure may then theoretically be utilized in various ways.

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12 Idem, p. 78, where further references to this view are given.
13 A. S. Tritton, *Islam, Belief and Practice* (London, 1951), p. 66.
14 Gluckman, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
15 R. F. Chagnon and C. S. Cove, *Principles of Anthropology* (New York, 1960), pp. 325-326.

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

INTRODUCTION

In the spring and summer of 1957 the Danish Dokan Expedition was working under Professor Harald Ingholt and Jørgen Lassøe on the Rania plain west of Lower Zab, a tributary of the Tigris in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Expedition concentrated on the excavation of the mound 'Tell Shemshâra'. Before the expedition left Denmark it offered to take with it a cultural anthropologist from the Ethnographical Department of the National Museum, who, based on the excavation camp on the right bank of the Lower Zab, would have an opportunity to investigate Kurdish villages in the vicinity. The assistance of the Carlsberg Foundation enabled my association with the Danish Dokan Expedition.

Being a woman anthropologist, I was given, in addition to general investigations of Kurdish ethnography, the special task of studying women's cultural pattern, which in Muslim areas is difficult for male investigators to undertake.

The necessary female interpreter for such investigations was obtained through the former Kurdish Minister, Tawfik Wahbi, who at that time was living in Baghdad and was in touch with the Danish Chargé d'Affaires, F. Lyon, succeeded Igor in the summer of 1957 by F. de Jonquières. I left Denmark in May to join the expedition at the Dokan Dam Site, which is near the dam building over Lower Zab, the Anglo-French[1] engineering project in the Kurdish mountains started by the Iraq Development Board.

As it transpired that the neighbouring twin villages Topzawa-Rakawa, from which the British and French engineers obtained some of their workmen, offered excellent possibilities for study, it was arranged through the Resident Engineer of the Dokan Dam Site, Mr. J. G. Campbell, that, whilst waiting for a woman interpreter, I should be taken as a paying guest in Sheikh Taffik's home in Topzawa as a member of this village-owner's family.

In the course of three visits, through the good offices of Tawfik Wahbi and the mayor of Sulaimaniyeh, the capital of the Liwa of Sulaimaniyeh, touch was gained with a young Kurdish woman school teacher, Madjida Karim Sa'id, who, accompanied by her 13 year old half-brother, agreed to go with me to the villages mentioned and stay with me in the sheikh's home as long as my work out there took me. When this had ended, supplemented by a visit to and stay at the new evacuated and flooded Gerry village, Mirza Rostam, with trips over the boundaries to Sheikhs and Sergalu, the field of work was transferred to my interpreter's home in Sulaimaniyeh, a Kurdish provincial town. From here journeys

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

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Map of the Middle East. The oblong panel includes the whole of the author's itinerary, which extended south of the Kurdish area to the alluvial plains around Baghdad.

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were made into the area with maps at hand whose owners were related to my interpreter. In this way Halabja, Balkha and Tawella, near the Persian frontier, were visited. As transport the country's own resources were used; hired cars, primitive local lorries, mules and horses. If no private hosts were available we spent the nights at native Kurdish hotels. With the exception of the necessary visits to the Dukan Dam Site in order to store the objects it was my task to collect for the Ethnographical Department of the National Museum, and to contact the member of the Danish Dukan Expedition, who every fortnight came in from the excavation camp with the Land Rover for provisions, and a single visit to the excavation site at Tell Shemshara. I lived all the time I was in the country (3rd May - 5th Sept.) among the Kurds.

It became necessary that I should visit Baghdad at the beginning of August in connection with the forwarding of my collection. As the expedition was dissolved in the middle of that month, I travelled back alone via Kirkuk to Sulaimani. Here I stayed another month, paid a further visit to Tapawra-Rakawa and went with my interpreter and her brother to Sorkan, enjoying a lengthy trip to Rawanduz via Kirkuk, Mirawi and Erbil in order to determine some unknown variants. When I was to leave Kirkuk my interpreter and an older brother accompanied me to Baghdad where I was given the opportunity of living with Kurds in an Arab town.

Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

Detail map of the area visited. The area is covered by R.A.F.'s aeronautical maps Nos. 346, 427 and 428.

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Thus during my approx. four months stay in Iraqi Kurdistan I did not, as planned, stay among Europeans at the Danish Diyala Expedition's camp with daily, but isolated visits to Kurdish villages, but lived almost uninterruptedly in Kurdish homes. This greatly facilitated the work of the women interpreter, who would hardly have secured her family's permission to live permanently in an European excavation camp among foreign men even though another woman was present. In addition to the opportunity to follow the life of the village, I also had the chance to study life in an urban environment. In addition, my interpreter, besides being of invaluable assistance in my work of investigating the lives

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Introduction

114 12 [15] of the other women, was also an intelligent representative of the slow unwinding transformation of the Kurdish woman's life pattern, doubly manifest, as in her home at Sakiwani there was, in addition to sisters who represented the same development, a group of elderly women that constituted the background on which this change is taking place.

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

responsibility for a party of British officers which had been taken prisoner by her cousin and brother-in-law, Sheikh Mahmud, during the disturbances in that town in 1918. The wisdom of this was demonstrated shortly afterwards when Sheikh Mahmud was captured near the Iranian Pass and, on account of her behaviour, a sentence of death passed upon him was reduced to imprisonment for life[11], which later was rescinded.

Another prominent Kurdish woman, Fātima Khan, is referred to by Edmonds[12]. After her husband's death she administered his estate which comprised eight villages. Elected by the inhabitants of the villages she operated, although a woman, with the government authorities.

The information available from various male authors can be summed up as follows: The Kurdish woman is said to possess a far freer position than is the case in other Muslim areas. She does not veil, except in town, and urban surroundings. Monogami prevails. "Love marriages" can occur.

Below I shall describe the extent to which this information tallies with my personal experience as a woman amongst Kurdish women in Southern Kurdistan.

Fig. 1. Peasant woman crushing wheat in a revolving grinder. Topzawa.

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Fig. 21. Sheikh Taffik's property. Tupzawa.

configuration of the ground, lay on a ledge above it. The farm had direct access to the courtyard through an opening in a low wall. It comprised stables and store rooms which enclosed the small court on three sides; the fourth side being filled by a garden and a basin for ablutions. As appears from the ground plan and elevation, the entrance to the farm lay to the west of the property. Its double gate was of corrugated iron. Admission to the family house was only possible through a narrow wooden door with two steps outside and a corridor inside which led into the court-yard. In the wing of the family house a room possessing direct access to the highroad was occupied by the widow and her sons, and in the wing of the farm dwelt the servant girl and her children. Neither of these two rooms was connected with the family house or the farm, being completely isolated. Built together with, but not directly connected with it, was the guest wing[55]. A guest wing is typical of the finest houses in Kurdish villages and is maintained by subsidies from the whole village to the squire. It is dealt with in detail as a sociological phenomenon by Barton, Edmonds and Leach[56]. There was direct access to the guest wing from the narrow highway that passed by the property to the village of Rakawa. At right angles to the small steps up to the door of the family house some more steps led to another wooden door through which one passed into a loggia. The roof to this was supported by five columns of hacked, but variegated shaped poplar trunks with roughly-hacked wooden blocks inserted as

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342 [55A] [114]

[Text continues Top of P. 32--analyst]

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Within Islam the contraction of marriage is signalized by two things: the drawing up of a marriage settlement and the wedding festivities.

The drawing up of a marriage settlement is, as Levy points out[367], the main—I am tempted to say the basic—feature of a contracted marriage. According to what my interpreter told me, a marriage settlement drawn up by Kurds in the urban milieu of Sulaimani demands the presence of four male members of the bride's family, the most important of whom is the bride's guardian, as a rule her father. Four male members of the prospective bridegroom's family, that is to say the groom and three others, must also be present. There is also a *mulla* and the *qādī* by whom the marriage settlement is drawn up[368]. My interpreter informed me that the prospective bride might also be present, though closely-veiled and in a somewhat passive role. Whereas the bridegroom thus has no opportunity of seeing the bride until the marriage is consummated, the bride apparently is afforded a chance of seeing her future husband. I was also told that on this occasion she is asked whether she agrees and that it is then open to her to refuse to go on with the marriage, her father being unable to force her. According to the *shafi'i* rite the bride must agree to the marriage[369]. The marriage settlement is not concluded between the bride and bridegroom, but between the bride's *wali* and the bridegroom with the others present as witnesses[370]. The bridegroom agrees to pay the bride price, its size is finally fixed, and with it the decisive point: how great a part of it is to be immediately available, before the wedding, and how much is to be held back for payment in the event of a divorce, that is to say if a man repudiates his wife (a right not shared by the latter), or in case of the husband's demise. When my interpreter's sister contracted marriage, I was told that the sum set aside for the contingency of divorce or widowhood was not, as normally[371], a half or a third, but if I understood aright—nearly four times the sum paid out, 1500 Din. (1500. The paid up part of the bride price was 400 Din. = £40). This large sum my interpreter's family demanded guaranteed to assure the sister's marital position and to prevent any repudiation in the event of another wife[372]. I cannot say whether the sum was made larger than in fact it was in order to add prestige to the family's economic reputation.

With the drawing up of the marriage settlement the man, in addition to paying out the bride price, undertakes to support his wife, give her food, clothes, and attendance commensurate with the standard obtaining in her family home[373]. A breach of this marriage settlement gives the wife grounds for divorce. The other possibility a woman has to obtain divorce is the re-payment of the bride price. Apart from these instances the right to dissolve marriage lies with the man, who utters three times the word *talāq*, "I repudiate thee", or better, in Juynboll's[374] translation: "I renounce all rights over thee", as in some cases when drawing up the marriage settlement certain clauses, *sh'ūg*, can be inserted or attached so that definite lapses or positive actions on his part nullify his rights over the wife, thus providing her with one more possibility to obtain a divorce. On contracting marriage the wife undertakes to bear the husband children who belong to the husband, also in the event of divorce. Here it is true, the woman takes the children with her so long as they are quite small, but is obliged to send them back to the father's home when the boys are six and the girls eight years old.

As mentioned, the drawing up of the marriage settlement takes place at the *qādī*, the judge. (It was stated that in the villages only the local *mulla* was necessary). This has caused Ehrenp[375] to declare that the drawing up of a marriage settlement is a civil act, advancing as proof of this assertion that

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the deed is drawn up at the judge's residence and not in a mosque, which is a place of prayer and not (like Christian churches) a form of registration office. The same view is to be found in Blackman[108], who says that among Muslims no religious ceremony takes place—marriage is not a sacrament. Levy also states that "in Islim marriage is a secular contract and not a religious rite"[109]. This is not in accord with Kurdish conditions. That the drawing up of a marriage settlement here seems to be governed by religious precepts seems to be indicated by, for example, the presence of the mulla. According to *Juynboll*[110] matrimonial law and the rights of inheritance are generally considered more or less connected with religion, and within the dual legal system, spiritual and temporal, matrimonial and family rights fall to the spiritual judge. Islam is more than a religion, it is a whole system comprising all aspects of human life[111]. It would be highly remarkable if the drawing up of the marriage settlement should be a temporal act in view of the fact that the justification for the paying of a bride price is found in the Coran[112]. Rather can it be said that the drawing up of a marriage settlement within the *shiʿi* rite of Islim, which the Kurds follow, is an act connected with religion. What on the other hand is distinct from the drawing up of the marriage settlement is the consummation of the marriage, which failing a better expression, what can be termed "the wedding". It has nothing to do either with the secular or spiritual authorities, being a purely private affair that sooner or later, often years after the drawing up of the marriage settlement, takes place in the form of a family festival with friends. This occasion, as opposed to the drawing up of the marriage settlement, can be said to be a secular, and particularly a quite private, action.

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The social intercourse of engaged couples in the event of prospective spouses knowing each other.

In the educated urban milieu of Sulaimani I met one example of a couple who knew each other before marriage and had themselves chosen each other. This, of course, is the exception and was due entirely to their milieu.

The girl in the case was the 23 year *old sister of my interpreter*. Both she and the young man in question were primary schoolteachers who had met as colleagues and fallen in love. When the young man realised his interest in the girl he had applied to my interpreter, also a schoolteacher, as his family lived outside in one of the village areas from which no woman, mother or sister, was able to act as go-between. He told her that "he would like to be admitted to her family", and asked if she would act as his advocate and place the matter before her father. This had been done and the marriage settlement had been drawn up a year before my stay in Kurdistan. The wedding festival was imminent and took place whilst I lived with the family. In the months prior to the wedding I was able to study the pattern of behaviour applying to former colleagues now engaged, and the position of the prospective groom in the family he was to enter.

By the marriage settlement the young man became a member of the family to such an extent that he was able, with her 13 year old half-brother, to accompany my interpreter to the village of Topzawa where she was to live with me in the sheikh's house. The night he spent there in order to act as an important escort and to investigate whether conditions there were sufficiently re-assuring, he was able to sleep in the same room as her half-brother and herself. My interpreter explained that she might

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clumsy, high-legged, un-upholstered sofas and chairs, whilst the later pieces were covered in red velvet in the French fashion of the '90s.

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Corresponding to all this for the bride's future home and for her personal use—purchased with the 400 Din. the bridegroom had to pay out of the bride price—the bride's family, a mixture of educated and uneducated urban environments, also expended about 130 Din. on gifts for the bridegroom and his relatives who arrived the day before the wedding.

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The bridegroom received from his coming in-laws his wedding clothes, in this case a light European summer suit, and with it leather shoes, socks, ties, handkerchiefs, shirt, underwear, pyjamas, soap, shaving tackle, bath gown, small bath mat of velvet to sit on during the bath, and a box of sweets. All these were later wrapped in a hand-embroidered silk cloth[18], and delivered by a messenger, an elderly woman to whom he had to give a gift of money. Three of the bridegroom's closest female relatives, that is to say the mother and two sisters, were given printed cotton for kirtles. Seven of the bridegroom's male relations received gifts from the bride's family in the form of a shirt and a pair of drawers. Of the shirts three were European style, bought in Baghdad, accompanied by ties, socks and handkerchief, whilst the other four shirts were home-made, Kurdish type. The seven pairs of drawers were all bag-shaped and without fly, though the three pairs intended to be worn with the European shirt and European suit were not cut quite as wide as the others that were designed to be worn under a Kurdish dress. A large consignment of English greys was purchased for this purpose, being cut out in the home by a seamstress who took them away to be made up.

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In addition to the expense on these gifts to the bridegroom and his family, came the value of the ornaments that the bride would receive from her family when paying her first visit in her family home a week after the wedding in order to take a bath. The value of these trinkets was said to be 42 Din. Thus the cost of the wedding was, according to my information: bridegroom and his family 400 Din.; bride's family 192 Din., which latter roughly corresponded to half the bride price. To this came the cost incurred by the bride's family in entertaining the women who visited the bride the whole of the wedding day until she left.

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Hay mentions that there is a difference between the urban and the village milieu in Kurdistan in regard to the expenses payable by the two families involved in a wedding. According to him[19] the young man in a Kurdish village must collect a certain sum in order to acquire a bride, whereas in the towns the bride's family gives her such ample equipment that it is unnecessary for the young man to save up in order to "purchase" her. This does not agree with my experience and the information I was given by Kurds.

As has already been shown, the position in Southern Kurdistan is that in villages the man pays a certain sum in money or cattle as the bride price or bride wealth in addition to a dowry for the bride, receiving in return nothing whatever from the bride's family. To this extent my information agrees with Hay's—and with Lane's in regard to conditions in Egyptian villages[20]. When we come to urban conditions the bridegroom, in my experience, is obliged to pay a bride price, the distribution of which has been explained above, corresponding to the girl's social position. However, the bridegroom and his relatives, plus the bride, receive from the bride's family gifts costing about half as much as the amount paid out of the bride price. This does not accord with Hay, who, in the case of the towns,

583 does not mention that the man must pay any bride price. Nor does it quite agree with the information
114 Lane gives about urban conditions among Arabs in Egypt, where he lists the wedding expenses of
369 the bride's family equal the sum paid in bride-wealth by the bridegroom, but states that the money expended by the farmer goes on furniture, clothes and trinkets for the bride, and that all this, called "jahaz", is the bride's personal property, takeable by her in the event of divorce[119], whereas he makes no mention of the bride's family presenting anyone of gift to the bridegroom and his family.

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585 291 *Wedding preparations.* Of the bride's night th satin quilt and the quilted coats are made by male craftsmen in the bazar. On the other hand a seamstress came to the house where, under the supervision of the women in the family, she cuts sukrities, long baggy trousers and jackets from the silk, muslin and lavender purchased in Baghdad andalaimani. When the material was cut out, the bride's step-mother, then a married woman, brought large piece of loaf sugar which, with a sugar hammer, was smashed and strewn over the material. This was said to bring good luck.

[777] The same seamstress cut out of a roll of Enlish greys the shirts of genuine Kurdish form and the drawers given by the bride's family to male relatives of the bridegroom. The seamstress then rolled the pieces of material together, and left to workon in her own home.

585 302 515 The day before the wedding in my interpreter's home at Sulaimani a woman arrived in order to remove all superfluous hair from the bride's ody, whilst the bride herself removed the pubic hairs during a triple steam bath in the honey's bathroom. Whereas an unmarried Kurdish girls, as with the Arabs, never shaves or removes hair fro her body in other ways, she must from the time of marriage keep her body free of hair[121]. Hairs re plucked out or removed by smearing on a paste, the composition of which I was unable to discover. Dickson mentions a depilatory of this kind with the Badawi, a solution of zinc and arsenic[122] use by the well-to-do, while other women pluck out the hair with their fingers. Lane states that in Egypt women use a kind of resin called "ilkin shirmet", which is smeared on in a melted state, whereasther women pluck the hairs out "after merely rubbing the part with ashes of charcoal"[123]. At anotherplace Lane[124] refers to a depilatory, "noorah", compound of quicklime mixed with about one eight parof orpiment. This powder is stirred in water to a paste that is smeared on, loosening the hairs in tw minutes, after which it is washed off.

[305] This removal of hair in my interpreter's fmily thus took place in the home with the help of an expert, and not, as reported by Granqvist abut the Palestinian Arabs, in the public bath[126]. It was said that the bridegroom went through a similar process[127].

585 291 197 In the bride's home this form of beauty ratment in connexion with the marriage was of great interest to all the women there. This went s far that an aunt of the bride grasped her by the legs as she sat tailor-fashion in the courtyard, andattempted to overturn her in order to satisfy herself that the pubic hairs had been duly removed. I was possible to determine this as the bride that evening was not wearing Kurdish-woman's costume with wide baggy trousers, but a long, pink nightgown with puffed sleeves—a European phenomenon adopted into the Kurdish dress scheme, worn with a little jacket but without long trousers. Apa from this episode, which must be considered an indication of the extent to which a wedding, down to the last detail, is a family and not a private affair, Kurds

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were exceedingly modest. Modesty, on the other hand, was of a type different from what we are accustomed to in our pattern of behaviour.

They felt dislike at displaying the naked body. All changing of clothes during the day among women took place in a squatting position without the body at any time being unwrapped. As elsewhere European summer dress in which the daughter of the Sheikh of Topzawa had wanted to be photographed caused her to break off the sitting and to dash into the dark cookhouse in the courtyard, where she sat bunched up in the corner with her naked arms clung protectively around her bare legs, when two peasant women from the village, fetching water, happened to pass the gate to the courtyard. In the urban milieu, when my interpreter and I took a steam bath together in the bathroom, she always kept her hand covering her lap when the sitting position on the small wooden stools whilst being dowsed was not sufficiently concealing.

On the other hand shyness did not apply when relieving nature. This took place collectively and in the presence of other women fetching water from the basin, where water was available for the subsequent washing, whether in the garden basin of the sheikh's houses at Topzawa and Serkan, at the more private well-like shaft in the courtyard of the Sheikh's house at Sargalu, or at one of the big public washing basins for women in the villages. This was done discretely sheltered by the ampleness of women's costumes, but was not a private but a joint undertaking, in which solitude and peace was neither sought nor expected.

The wedding. Lane[28] says that Arabs have a special preference for Mondays and Fridays for the celebration of weddings—that is to say the day on which the bride is handed over to the bridegroom—whereas, according to Hangi[29], the Turk-stamped Bosnian Muslims favour Sundays and Thursdays.

To judge by the four wedding feasts I had an opportunity of witnessing, wholly or in part, in Southern Kurdistan, the Kurds appear to follow the Turks in this matter. In the villages the two weddings took place on Sundays (16 June and 14 July, 1957), the third on a Wednesday (22 May, 1957), whilst the one wedding I was present at at Sulaimani was celebrated on a Thursday (8 August, 1957). Later my interpreter informed me by letter of her brother's wedding, which took place on a Monday (25 August, 1958). No rule can be discerned from such sparse material, merely the negative one that the Arab predilection for Friday—the most important day of the week for Islam—as the day for the handing over of the bride does not apply in the case of the Kurds. The weddings I witnessed in Topzawa and its neighbouring village, Rakawa, took place in a humble village milieu. The upper class village milieu wedding was not celebrated during my stay in Southern Kurdistan.

At two of the three village weddings I was able to observe the men's rule in the festivities, at the third the women's. In all three cases, however, I was in the bridegroom's home to which the bride was brought. In none of the cases did I have an opportunity to see what went on in the bride's home.

The fetching of the brides, All, who all came from outside, was a matter for the men[30]. At 6 in the morning a cortège of hired cars filled with men left the village for the bride's residence. Among the men, most of those in the village, was the bridegroom's father, but not the bridegroom, *abid.*

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

ceremony make her his wife again within the above-mentioned period[56]. Should he have pronounced 586
talaq three times or have stated it twice on the first occasion, the wife must contract a pro forma marriage 587
with another man and must be renounced by this "straw husband" before the husband can take her back[57]. The Koran forbids the promise of abstinence, or if you will, a semi-divorce within marriage, [587]
that is to say, that the husband declares: "Let thy back be to me as my mother's(", known as *zihar* (*zahr* = back)[58]. In this case the wife will not obtain the right to return to her family home with everything she brought into the marriage, plus what she may herself have earned and that part of the bride price (usually one third) that has been put aside for such a contingency, and with a view to facilitating a new marriage.

On her side the wife has the following possibilities of securing the dissolution of the marriage: The 562
marriage contract can contain a clause to the effect that neglect on the part of the husband gives the 586
wife the right to regard the marriage as dissolved, by repaying the bride price, if she can prove before a judge that the man does not fulfil his obligations in regard to maintaining her in accordance with her station; in cases of certain illnesses or if it should transpire that he is of poorer birth than stated.

On contracting marriage the husband undertakes to provide for the wife; she in return engages to 586
present him with children, which means that the children born belong to the man's home. If the [858]
marriage is dissolved whilst the children are small, the wife takes with her male children under two years of age[59], girls under nine (or up to puberty), whereafter they return to the husband's home. On marriage, therefore, the woman runs the risk of being renounced (attempts being made to reduce this by the fixing of a high bride price, and particularly by making as high as possible that part of it set aside for possible later payment); she also runs the risk of sharing the man with another wife or more. The husband runs a risk that the wife the women of his family have selected for him, whom in most cases he has never seen, is impossible to live with. To meet this contingency he has the immediate right to divorce her and also the right to take other wives.

Having briefly recounted the ordinary rules of Islam within the *shāfi'i* rite to which the Kurds 114
belong, I shall now attempt to recount what I experienced during my relatively short stay in Southern Kurdistan in order to throw light on matters concerning divorce and polygamy. I take these two phenomena together for, as will appear below, they are interwoven, and the one is often the reason for the other.

At the time I was able to study the conditions, there was in each of the three or four homes of the 565
village aristocracy that constitute my material for comparison, only one wife. This happened to be 595
so in the case of the sheikh families in Topzawa, Sargalu, Shadala and Serkan. Soane[60] states that the Kurds from north to south are monogamous, an assertion repeated by his wife[61]. This does not quite accord with my experience. In Topzawa the current wife had five children aged 18, 17, 13, 8 and 6. In the home there was also a step-daughter of 12. As illegitimate children are unknown in the [848]
Kurdish pattern of life, the sheikh, within a period lying between 1938 and 1945, has had two wives for a shorter or longer period, and the one who only presented him with one child was sent home to her parents.

The sister of the present one, about 35 years of age, was married to an old sheikh in Shadala. There appears here to have been a succession of marriages. Several groups of married sons with wives and

4: Hansen B-5 (1957) . 1961 MA11 Hans4 MA11

CONCLUSION

WOMAN'S POSITION IN THE COMMUNITY

As mentioned (p. 68) numbers of male travellers[1] have made statements about the position of Kurdish women in society. With the exception of Fraser[2], who distinguishes between the urban upper class and the village dwellers, Kurdish women are referred to under one heading. However, even from the limited material available to us, it is evident that there are at all events four different environments, each with its own pattern (and this division ignores the nomads). Soane emphasizes that Kurdish women are "... as free as in any European country"[3], and Rambout declares that "... la femme est considérée chez les Kurdes comme l'égale de l'homme"[4]. Even though in the case of the Kurds we must consider ourselves faced by a variant of the Islamic cultural pattern less orthodox than in other Muslim areas, I would point out the risk of using the terms "free position" and "equality" as understood in the West when attempting an assessment of the position of Islamic, and in this case Kurdish, women. Freedom and equality are concepts that must be viewed on the background of the position of Western women when their struggle for changed conditions was in progress at the end of the previous century. These terms bear no relation to the status of Kurdish women at present.

In an attempt to explain the Kurdish women's position in the community I shall now deal with the various forms of veil and the use made of them, contact with the world around, women's possibility of movement, and the degree of seclusion. I shall discuss also the distribution of authority between man and woman in the home, and, finally, the degree of common life in the home. These elements will be investigated within the four female environments existing within the area visited in Southern Kurdistan.

ANALYSIS OF VEIL TYPES

The veil. Five different types of veils, each with its function, but diligently distributed in the four female environments, were found to be in use. These were as follows: The triangular neck-shoulder veil, *dastmal*, the head veil, *shepik*, the yellow ochre "bridal" veil, the white European bridal veil, and the black face veil, *peče*.

The first type, really a shoulder cloth fastened by means of a loop to a cap sewn onto the crown of the cap, is included among the veils because its material, coarse tulle, interwoven with metal thread, of a green, rose or light-blue colour entitles it to be called a veil, and because its function was to hide the neck and pigtails of the married woman. It was an indispensible constituent of a married Kurdish woman's dress were in its complete form. *The neck-shoulder veil* presupposed the presence of a cap, but not necessarily the use of a turban. At Halabja, for example, it was worn with a coin-covered cap or

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and sons. Secondly, distant relatives of the married couples. In addition the family's courtyard and three-walled central room were open to men who were subordinates of the sheikh, economically dependent on him, or of a status that could be compared with this. In Tapawra this included the peasants who ploughed and harvested the sheikh's fields and the drivers who drove the lorries he and his brother had in their capacity of contractors for the construction work at Dokan Dam. The house was also open to beggars and to sayyids. The sheikh families at Sargalu and Serkan had both men and women servants. With the latter family there lived permanently a blind *mullah*[1], who occupied the women's part of the house and who, it is true, ate with the women of the house but he was paid by the sheikh and was thus a dependant. Men from the Gendarmerie, members of the Land Settlement Commission, and Europeans were not admitted to the family house where women were. These men were strangers by whom the women must not be seen. It can therefore be said that though seclusion is practised by the village aristocracy, it is in an elastic form that allowed definite categories of men, dependants in one way or another, access to the women's domain. This elasticity may help to explain the fact that Soane, disguised as a Persian merchant, and later, after the first World War, the British officers of the Mandate period, could be received by Halabja's first lady, Lady Adela, who after Osman Pasha's death became the head of the family. That she regarded Soane, who took employment with her son and of whose nationality she was unaware, as a subordinate there is no doubt. If she also considered the British officers as subordinate compared with her own position as representative of the town's most distinguished family, she would not by meeting them sacrifice any of her dignity or step outside the framework of her seclusion.

My impression was that, in the aristocratic village milieu, seclusion was not so much the result of an order from the men as a wish on the part of the women not to be seen by male strangers.

The elastic seclusion practised among the Kurds seemed to me to be far more like the British idea of "my home is my castle" than a form of incarceration. In consequence I do not believe that a male investigator is correct when writing that among the Kurds he visited in the Rowanduz district "... the Aghas consistently make a show of being very strict about the seclusion and veiling of their womenfolk when strangers are present while commoners, if they bother at all, are lax and casual"[2]. In my view it was the women themselves who felt the value of hindering male strangers from seeing them.

In support of this there is what a woman like Blackman says about conditions among the Egyptian *fellahin*: "To our western ideas such restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is not a fair judgement. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect ... and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk"[3]. As a result it is naturally in women's own interest to maintain seclusion. Incidentally, Lane reports of the Arab women in Egypt: "Still it might be imagined that the women of the higher and middle classes feel themselves severely oppressed, and are much discontented with the state of seclusion to which they are subjected; but this is not commonly the case; on the contrary, an Egyptian wife who is attached to her husband is apt to think, if he allows her unusual liberty, that he neglects her, and does not sufficiently love her, and to envy those wives who are kept and watched with greater strictness."[4] Barnes states something similar about conditions in India: "The Mohammedan ladies of South India are very strictly secluded, and are proud of it. They look upon it as a mark of respectful care, and are very contemptuous of women who are not taken care of in the same

4: Hansen E-4 (1997) 1961 MAI: Kurd MAI

way"[9]. As early as 1891 Garrett remarks that: "The seclusion of Moslem women, instead of being, as is generally assumed, a result of their "degraded position", is, on the contrary the outcome of the great respect and regard entertained for them by the men of their own nation."[10]

In the humble village milieu the activities of women: fetching water, participation in weeding and harvesting and, sometimes, in the building of clay houses, the collection of manured fuel, etc., brought them outside the area of their homes. Even in an ebatis form the maintenance of seclusion was thus manifestly impossible, but it is worth noticing that no village women from a twin villages of Topzawa and Rukawa, from which the Dokan Dam drew its Kurdish labourers, ever be persuaded to take work as house assistants or nurses with the European families. Any such would have been to obtain female help in these homes, but the Europeans had to be content with male cleaners.

A young British engineer who was taking a film in the two villages mentioned in order to provide local colour for another, larger film about the dam building, had no chance at all of taking the interior of the family house or the women in the sheikh's courtyard. Despite the elasticity / the seclusion obtaining within the village aristocracy, access for him was ruled out. He could only fit the exteriors of village houses with peasant women on their way to and from their outdoor occupations. It was worthy of note that none of these women ever stopped or opened a conversation with he. As Wandesforde-Smith says: "... although technically, unveiled the peasant woman in the Moslem world has very definitely the psychology of the veil". One single peasant home was opened to the young Englishman. The husband here did not work on the actual dam building, but in the office of the Dam Dam Bin, where he brewed tea and served it to Europeans all day long. In this way he had 0 more contact with the European milieu than his competitors, and the fact that he allowed access to h home for the taking of a film must be viewed in that light.

To sum up the conditions among humble peasant women: Neither over-garment or veil is worn. For practical reasons there was no possibility of maintaining seclusion. Village women's radius of active was not confined to the home, but comprised fields, watering places, workings and fruit plantations. In consequence they possessed far greater freedom of movement than'tid their more aristocratic sisters. However, although technically unveiled and not subject to seclusion, a division between the men's and women's worlds is maintained outside the actual work; one ever saw social contact between the two groups. At weddings men and women did not consort. They ate apart, and at those I witnessed the women took no part in the dancing. The men in the villagedanced several evenings running, the women hidden in the darkness, watching them from rough in th vicinity.

As opposed to the village milieu, the women of the educated urban milieu have achieved training behind them. In virtue of this they are able to enter the only two occupations open to'Kurdish women in Kurdistan: nursing or teaching. Through the former, whether at the Child Welfare Centre or as a visiting nurse calling at the various homes, the educated women in Sulaimani obtained a freedom of movement comparable to that enjoyed by humble village women. The same'applies to those who elected for the teaching profession and worked at Sulaimani's only girl school, th Goldie School for Girls, established in 1926.

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was in turn received as an honoured guest. To illustrate both a husband's position in a Kurdish Muslim home opposed to a young Englishman, I quote a letter received from one of the British engineers at the Dukan Dam Site who, with his wife, visited my interpreter's home after my departure: "Our visit .... almost coincided with a wedding of one of the sisters there .... It is certainly a woman's world in that household. The day after the wedding, the next day that we were there, the new husband was nowhere to be seen, and when we asked where he was we got the answer that already they had got tired of him kicking his heels round the house and they had sent him out in the town." As Blackman[9] says of the Egyptian *fellahin*-women: "Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in subjection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain a very firm hold on their husbands .... Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian man who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth".

In regard to possibility of movement and the distribution of authority between man and woman, it appears from the foregoing that the four feminine milieus within the area investigated evince the following picture (see diagram).

Distribution of certain common traits in four milieus

Culture elements	Village settlements		Nomadic village		Urbanized urban		Uneducated urban	
	unsegregated	segregated	unsegregated	segregated	unsegregated	segregated	unsegregated	segregated
Free veil and shid	0+0	0+0	0+0	0+0	+	+	+	+
Seclusion	+	+					+	+
Freedom of movement			+	+	+	+		
Position of women	equal to men		inferior to men		equal to men		superior to men	
Common life	+							
Polygamy	+		0+0				+	+

I *In the village settlements*: No veil, but the maintenance of seclusion. Equal distribution of authority between man and woman. A certain common life exists outside the home.

II *In the Kurdish village milieu*: Neither veil nor seclusion. Distribution of authority in the man's favour. Slight or no common life inside the home, that is to say the maintenance of the social barrier between the man's and woman's worlds.

III *In the urbanized urban milieu*: Use of the veil, but no seclusion. Equal distribution of authority between man and woman. Slight common life in the home, thus the maintenance of the social barrier between the worlds of men and women.

IV *In the uneducated urban milieu*: Both veil and seclusion. Distribution of authority to woman's advantage. No common life in the home, thus the maintenance of a barrier between the worlds of men and women.

It is hoped that it appears from the foregoing how difficult it is to use the term "free position" (or lack of it) and "equality" (or lack of it) when it is a matter of the Kurdish variant of the Islamic cultural pattern. Seclusion cannot be compared with the lack of liberty that existed in our culture until the

Ethnos E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11
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middle of the last century. Within her seclusion the Kurdish woman, like other Islamic women, is assured by the law and by the Coran of rights quite other than those accorded Western women prior to their emancipation[9]. Kurdish women were not suppressed. Even the humble village woman were no more suppressed than any woman in a peasant community could be when the bigger share of the work falls to her lot. It was a physically, not a legally, inferior status.

Nor are there any grounds for talking about lack of equal rights because men and women in Kurdistan each have their own pattern of life. One might as well say that a man had not the same rights as a woman because he was unable to follow her pattern of life. The world of men and women were simply divided, more or less (mostly more) from the cradle to the grave. One can therefore talk of an existing justification for this division, with a deviation in favour of the man within the humble village milieu, and in favour of the woman in the educated urban milieu.

ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE KURDISH WOMAN'S CULTURAL PATTERN IN THE LIGHT OF THE COMING "EMANCIPATION"

It is a fact that the Kurdish Muslim area, like other Muslim territories, is on the threshold of a transformation. The introduction of the necessary industrialization to improve the material side of this technically underdeveloped country was, in 1957, practically on the drawing-board. Even though these changes in the structure of society will last much the Kurds, their political minority in mountain difficult of access, the years ahead will also bring this area into the melting pot.

In conclusion, therefore, a glance must be cast on the culture pattern of the Kurdish woman, a culture worsened, if just to mark, at all events to radical change, and some of the conditions existing in 1957 are judged in their relation to coming reconstruction. As mentioned in the introduction, I had in the person of my interpreter, an example of the most "advanced" feminine type among the Kurdish women studied. When placing the word "advanced" in inverted commas I do so advisedly.

As a rule one overlooks the fact that cultures older than our own, despite the lack of our Western technical facilities, may in other directions represent a more advanced culture stage, and that a change caused by bitter economic necessity so far from representing progress may, on the contrary, well have to be paid for by retrogression in other spheres. At first sight the introduction of the Western woman's form of life is regarded as being of direct benefit to women with foreign culture patterns. It thus seems surprising that the abolition of the veil, the dropping of seclusion and so forth meets with opposition from women at some places. A few examples of this can be quoted.

In the Muslim areas of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the veil was abolished by Marshal Tito in 1952. Two years later, when visiting these provinces, I was told that it cost a woman three months' imprisonment to retain the black veil and sharpened over-garment which, with variants, I

4 Hansen E-9 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

178 391 562

particularly on the time taken up during the day by religion and the attention to be paid to it. None of the educated women with whom I avoided said prayers daily (see p. 140). The fact that they worked outside the home as school teachers, hospital or visiting nurses, was such a breach of the original Islamic pattern in which the exercise of religion in daily life demanded both time, place and attention which were difficult to reconcile with any kind of consistent and effective work. My interpreter, a representative of the best-educated Kurdish women of the present time, had sacrificed her active participation in Islam's religious practices. However, by so doing, she lost the right and duty to break off from even the most pressing work in order to concentrate on spiritual matters. In consequence, some of the dignity of daily life disappeared, for quarrels and dissensions are difficult when regularly broken by the necessity of prayer. If women are sacrificed into an effective contact hand anyone outside the home, religion – and the peace of mind that goes with it – will be largely lost to them.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BASIS ON WHICH THE EMANCIPATION OF THE EUROPEAN WOMAN BEGAN AND THAT EXISTING IN MUSLIM AREAS

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If we compare conditions in the West with those in Islamic areas the following differences are apparent:

When the women's emancipation movement began in Western society in the previous century, two worlds existed for women over a certain age: that of the wife and that of the old maid. Due to the fact that all women within a community like the Kurdish and other Muslim societies possessed the possibility of living the life of a normal woman—to be married and bear children— there has never been in Mohammedan countries a group of matrimonially-superfluous women, the type mainly behind the Women's movement in the West. Even today in Western communities the first thing stated about a woman—apart from the position she may personally have acquired—is whether she is married or not, Mrs. or Miss. From the point of view of career it has always been, and still is, in the Western world of greater advantage for a woman to enter marriage than it is for a man—quite contrary to conditions in Kurdistan. To remain unmarried in the Islamic world is, as mentioned by several quarters[1], an impossibility, a view to which the Kurds subscribe. All a young man's energies are therefore concentrated on saving up money for a fitting bride price.

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The difference in the view of the bride price as viewed from the outside world and as seen from inside—in this case in Egypt—is stressed by Granquist when she writes: "As a matter of fact there is a very close connection between the bride price given and the value ascribed to a woman. But while the Arabian women would consider it a shame and disparagement if nothing or too small a bride price

4: Hainaux E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Hard MA11

were given, and while it is clear that the husband himself would look down upon such a wife, and that the public opinion would belittle her and therefore a high bride price is looked upon as a protection and a guarantee that a woman shall be honoured and well treated. Europeans have looked at the facts differently and said: we live in the position of the woman that she is bought. How people among whom bride price is customary do not understand the Western ideal, their natural conclusion is that she is not thought to be worth a Bride price. Here two completely different points of view clash and in each case only the objectionable in the opposite view is considered. It shows how much people's judgement depends on customs, which is no certain or absolute measure of value"[18].

What is now being offered the Muslim woman in various areas, and what will be offered the Kurdish woman sooner or later, is the abandonment of a protected and valued position; she will be asked to renounce being an essential link in a man's career, the only means whereby he can raise himself to the more socially-valued married state.

Instead she will obtain the partial equality we know in the West. In place of the clearly-crowned special position based on the difference of the sexes, she will acquire a partial equality with the opportunity to compete with men in all walks of life. At the same time her efforts in the sphere that have hitherto been reserved to her will be correspondingly less prized.

As the industrialisation of the country progresses, a large part of women's domestic activities will, as has happened in other countries, be transferred to trade with all its consequences, both good and bad. Her firmly-anchored culture pattern, sanctioned by religion, will collapse, though not by her wish, rather the reverse.

In the event of divorce and the adoption of monogamy, the stationary home that has so far existed for children will be dissolved. The solitary, divorced mother and the deserted unmarried mother will become social features to be incorporated into the community structure, as is about to be the case in our culture, where the number of solitary women has now reached such proportions that it can neither be overlooked nor concealed. The elderly will not obtain a place in the joint family, and the former will no longer be able to afford protection to girls. The paramount demand concerning virginity is only logically justified provided a home exists where the girl can dwell, protected from the difficulties of life, and her parents— and not herself— arrange her marriage.

The older members of the family are deprived of the right and duty to plan the marriages of the young and thus extend their family connections with consequent improved security for the individual. The emotional choice of a married partner will become universal. As the young gradually take their fate into their own hands they will neglect their personal responsibility for their elders, which will be taken over by the State.

When saying that women are "emancipated" in Islamic areas when the veil, and what it stands for, is abolished, this change in her way of life cannot be compared with what happened to the Western woman when emancipated at the turn of the century. It is true that the life pattern of Islamic women

1957 is being remodelled to resemble our own, but the structure of the culture being transformed is not at all like the one that prevailed in the West when women's position was definitely improved.

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114 What has been said will, perhaps, explain why difficulties arise when governments in Islamic areas decree that women are to be "liberated" and the veil abolished. That certain advantages accrue to the men by these changes is obvious, but the difficulties that have arisen suggest that the Islamic woman has to abandon more rights and advantages than has so far been made clear. Perhaps, then, this investigation into the life of the Kurdish women as it is today—or rather, as it was in 1957—on the threshold of transformation, but still representing, if not a typically Islamic culture pattern, at least certain features that apply to other Islamic areas, may serve to cast light on the question.

5: Edmonds G-5 (1923, 1945) 1957 MA11 Kurd MA11

THE KURDS OF IRAQ

C. J. Edmonds*

I.

KURDISTAN is the country inhabited by the Kurds as a homogeneous community. It is divided between Turkey, Persia and Iraq with small overlaps into Syria and the Soviet Union, and its boundaries do not coincide with any international frontiers or internal administrative divisions.

Iraqi Kurdistan is bounded on the north and east by the Turkish and Persian frontiers, where the population on both sides is almost entirely Kurdish. On the south-west the internal ethnical boundary lies approximately along the railway from the Syrian frontier to Mosul city on the Tigris and thence a straight line to Mandali on the Persian frontier. The majority of the Kurds are thus concentrated in the four liwas[1] which in Ottoman times constituted the vilayet of Mosul: Mosul (31% of the total population), Arbil (91%), Kirkuk (12%) and Sulaimani (100%). Kurds also have a majority in the two adjacent *qadhas* of Khanaqin and Mandali. Other than the Kurds, there are villages of Chaldean Christians near Mosul city to the north and east, and about 10,000 Assyrians compactly settled in the highlands of the Amadiya region: there are also colonies of Turkomans in a string of towns, large and small, along the great highway leading from Mosul through Arbil, Altun Köprü, Kirkuk and Kifri towards Baghdad. On the other hand there are islands of Kurds outside these limits, the most interesting being the Jabal Sinjar, west of Mosul, where most of the inhabitants are Yazidis, the people often misleadingly described as devil worshippers.

The Kurdish population of Iraq can be estimated with a fair degree of accuracy, on the basis of the census of 1947, at about 900,000 or nearly one fifth of the total for the whole country. No statistics are available for Persian Kurdistan but a similar figure would be a reasonable guess. The Turkish census of 1945 gives the number of persons whose mother tongue was Kurdish as one and a half million; there is reason to think that the real number of Kurds is higher, perhaps two millions. The religion of the great majority of the Kurds in all three countries is Sunni Muslim; the mystical dervish orders have adherents in all parts of Kurdistan.

Of the larger towns Sulaimani is entirely and Arbil predominantly Kurdish. Smaller townships in which Kurds form the whole or the large

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1 [territorial-administrative units, with vilayets sub-divided into liwas which are subdivided into qadhas — Analyst]

7: Barth E-S (1951) 1953 MAII Kurd MAII

stable, and official administration, directed from Baghdad, grew in scope and progressively enlarged its area of effective control.

Such then is the background of the villages where the following material was collected. They are primarily tenant villages in the Sulaimani valley, or villages dominated by freeholding Hamawand farmers. However, certain aspects of local social structure become clear only by comparison with other situations — particularly those found in the *Jaf* areas — or by historical comparisons and deductions. The data on Jaf organization was obtained from a limited number of informants on short visits to various villages. For historical material, C. J. Rich's accounts (op.cit) have been found most useful.

I have tried to avoid bringing conditions and factors in the towns of Sulaimani, Chamchamal, Halebja, etc. into the picture. The numerous «Western» influences in these centers are extremely complicated and difficult to evaluate. In the intricacies of the class and near-caste system, differential contacts and reactions due to sub-cultures are indeed complex. The rural areas, on the other hand, show greater uniformity in patterns: the tribal areas are organized and separable, and the tenant villagers, in their small, endogamous communities, have strong patterns of localism and traditionalism. There is a popular story illustrating this localism: A donkey belonging to one of the tenant farmers in a village ran away; so the farmer followed it, to catch it. The donkey climbed up the hillside, far away from the village, but the farmer did not want to lose it. So he followed it high up into the mountains, never turning, and finally close to the mountain top he caught it. On turning around he saw below him the whole beautiful Shahr-i-zur plain, in which his own village lay. The peasant gasped and exclaimed: «I never knew the world was so vast!»

What goes on in the towns belongs, as far as most villagers are concerned, to a quite separate world, and it seemed both in the field and in working up the notes valid to separate off the Kurdish *countryside* as the area of study. But due to diversity even in this area, any attempt at giving a conventional anthropological description of «the culture» of «the society» must fail. Each of the compact, widely separated little villages shows characteristics of its own, local

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

CHAPTER 1

Introductory

121 The following account is based upon a five weeks field survey carried out during the summer of 1938. It was intended to follow this up with an intensive study of one locality over a period of twelve months. Political developments in Europe made this project impracticable at the time and the scheme has now been abandoned.

For the facilities afforded me in Iraq I am particularly indebted to Mr.C.J.Edmonds, Adviser to the Iraq Government, Captain Tyrwan Holt, Oriental Secretary at the British Embassy Baghdad, and His Excellency Ahmad Beg i Tawfiq Beg, Mutasarrif of Erbil, in whose province this research was carried out.

The justification for publishing the somewhat superficial data contained in this monograph lies in the absence of any strictly comparable material elsewhere. The general form of Kurdish social organisation as here described is probably fairly typical of that of a large number of Mohammedan peoples scattered throughout the mountainous areas of western Asia. Concerning such peoples there is at present available very little ethnographic material of any kind and the postulate that the Kurdish form of society is typical is put forward as an hypothesis open to correction in the light of further study.

121 171 Of more immediate relevance is the close correlation that undoubtedly exists between Kurdish social forms and those of Arabia in general. This fact is of interest since linguistically the Kurds are of "aryan" rather than "semitic" stock. Concerning the "manners and customs" of various Bedouin and Semitic groups there is of course an enormous mass of literature available, some of it of the highest scientific quality, but the emphasis in every case has been to make an historical record of ethnographic fact rather than to study any particular group as a society in functioning existence at the present time. The work of Jaussen, Musil, Lane, Drower and Murray to name but a few, though admirably detailed, is by modern standards somewhat lifeless, since it describes the pattern of various cultural norms without, as a rule, showing their social significance or demonstrating the fundamental interrelationship between them. The earlier studies of Robertson-Smith, Frazer and Westermarck were entirely synthetic in character and gave no true picture of the functioning of any single

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* A. Jaussen - Les Coutumes des Arabs au Pays de Moab
A. Musil - Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins
E.W.Lane - Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians
E.S.Drower - The Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran
G.W.Murray - Sons of Ishmael

• 114 society. Nevertheless these works continue to be of fundamental importance as contributions to anthropological theory. There have been 113 important studies of particular aspects of semitic culture, notably that of Mrs. Seligman on Kinship and Granqvist on Marriage, the latter being at the present time unique in its wealth of documentary detail concerning the actual position of women in a Mohammedan society, but we still lack a coordinated study for any single area. Owing to the lack of adequate empirical data the present monograph does not effectively fill that gap, but it does provide for the first time an indication of the practical organisation of a settled group whose kinship affiliations are of the typical semitic pattern. The details of my account will it is hoped be filled in and elaborated by further research.

The existing documentary material concerning Kurdistan and the Kurds is somewhat meagre in quality. Most of it consists of highly romanticised travel stories of which the title of Millingen's Wild Life among the Koords (1870) gives a fair indication of the contents. The romantic tradition is incidentally still maintained, as evidence G.J.Wheller's Kinbrush in verschlossene Kurdistan published only in 1937

For the Southern Kurdish area in general little serious ethnographic material is available, though Hellmut Christoff's Kurden und Armenier dealing with the Turkish area to the north has some relevance. V.F.Minorsky's Kurds: Notes and Observations published in Russian in 1915 refers, I believe, in part to the area under discussion but this has not been accessible to me.

Concerning the Rowandus area itself there are only two books generally accessible. A.W.Hamilton's Road through Kurdistan which is a light hearted though highly interesting account of the construction of the strategic motor road up to Rowandus and on to the frontier, and W.R.Hay's Two Years in Kurdistan. The latter deals precisely with the same area and the same individuals as are the subject of this monograph; I shall refer to it frequently both in criticism and as providing supporting evidence. Further local colour may be obtained from W.A.Wigram's Cradle of Mankind, which deals with a neighbouring area slightly to the North West; the author's religious prejudices in favour of the Assyrian (Christian) community however give a marked bias to many of his judgements.

121 Of my own study I repeat that further research will doubtless correct my analysis on many points of detail. Nevertheless I believe the general correlation of the elements of social organisation to be

• H.L.Seligman - Studies in Semitic Kinship (Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies Vol.iii)
H.H.Granqvist - Marriage Conditions in a Palestine Village

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

The Nomads. In addition to the permanent settled inhabitants of the three areas here discussed there are certain nomadic groups who move seasonally from one area to another and even out of the district altogether. These nomads are again in many respects a distinct cultural group; their economy is based exclusively on pastoralism as opposed to the pastoral-agriculturalism of the settled peoples. The largest of the nomad tribes are the Herki. They are normally resident in Persia near the southernmost end of Lake Urmia. These high altitudes cannot provide sufficient fodder for their herds throughout the year and during the late autumn the bulk of the tribe migrates down the Rowandus river and spreads out through the foothills (Area B) and the northern fringe of the plains. They return to Persia with the melting of the snows in the late spring. I have no first hand evidence concerning these people and the second hand evidence appears to be both fabulous and contradictory. There is reason to think that their tribal organisation at the present time functions more perfectly than that of the settled groups, presumably owing to less government interference. They possess definite grazing rights in certain areas, even in districts nominally under the control of settled groups* though in other areas they pay some sort of rental for the right to herd their flocks. Their migration is linked with important trade activities. They bring salt with them from Persia to Iraq, and take back wheat and barley. Wool is disposed of on the Erbil market as well as large numbers of their livestock. The duty-free import of salt is of course strictly illegal but is winked at by the authorities. It was reported in the summer of 1938 that the Persian authorities intended to compel the Herki to adopt a settled habitat. It is thus unlikely that it will ever be possible to determine the precise position of this group in the political and economic organisation of the Kurdish area as a whole.

In my field work I stayed nearly all the time in villages occupied by members of the Soran and Balik tribes (see Map 2).

*The Iraq government authorities are able to carry on all negotiations with the Herki through the agency of a single paramount Agha, this despite the fact that the tribe itself scatters into small family groups throughout a very wide area; this seems to imply a high degree of tribal integration. During the summer of 1938 a law case was proceeding between the Agha paramount of the Herki and Jemil Agha of Bahrika (Gerdi tribe) as to whether the former need pay any rent to the latter for the grazing rights of what appeared to be Gerdi land. Jemil Agha complained to me bitterly that the Herki seemed likely to win their case owing to their greater wealth and resources for corruption. The case however establishes the point that they might claim traditional grazing rights in land seemingly within the sphere of influence of permanently settled groups.

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

622 through the marriage of his sons to nearly every important leader,
581 tribal, religious, or townsman, within fifty miles radius. More humble Aghas are content with one or two alliances with neighbouring notables, while the rest of their offspring are married off to members of their own community, thus further strengthening the bonds of kinship between the Agha and his followers. It is interesting to examine the effect of this in greater detail.

> Sheikh Mohammad of Walash was one of 9 surviving brothers; he himself has had nine wives and has six surviving sons, and several daughters
>
> Mir Hamid Amin of Dergala has had 6 wives and 24 children of which there survive 9 sons and 5 daughters.

If we consider the male side of the tree only, it would appear that the average reproduction rate of a 'princely' Agha is of the order of 8 surviving sons. If we assume that the total population of the villages remains very roughly stationary we must reach the conclusion that the effective birthrate is very heavily loaded in favour of the Aghas. The effect of this would seem to be that in many of the smaller villages the Agha is not only of the same clan as nearly everyone but actually quite closely related to about half the population. I was unable to make any accurate census of a village but my observations at *Walash were I think reasonably accurate, and tend to confirm this calculation.

622 There appeared to be twelve separate households, of which four
592 are accounted for by the Agha's fortress and the establishments of his third and fourth married sons and of a brother. (The two eldest sons have been established as Aghas in their own right over neighbouring villages). The population I estimated at ninety, in the proportion twenty five men, thirty women, thirty five children. The Aghas household appeared to consist of about twenty persons including his younger children and personal servants; while the households of his married sons and his brother contained about eight persons each. In this case therefore quite half the population of the gund was in immediate kinship or economic relationship with the Agha. The case may be exceptional, but serves to explain why a rental of 50% of the yield of the land does not in practice prove entirely extortionate.

622 Comparison of these observations and those of Hay

614 The foregoing account shoes the interrelationship of the
• 114 political and kinship organisation among the Balik Kurds. As a commentary upon sociological method it is interesting to note what

*This village would appear to be fairly average so far as size is concerned, though centres such as Dergala and Merga are vastly larger. Walash however is in some respects the private fortress of Sheikh Mohammad and its kinship organisation may not be typical.

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happens when the same empirical facts are considered without an adequate appreciation of the sociological significance of kinship. The following quotations illustrate the position of the Agha as understood by Hay.

The first is reasonable enough:-

> (p. 65) A tribe is a community or federation of communities which exists for the protection of its members against external aggression and for the maintenance of the old racial customs and standards of life. Some tribes have no recognised chiefs some have many.

The second is more hypothetical:-

> (p. 65/66) The position of the chief varies greatly in different tribes. In the remoter mountains, though granted the most ungrudging obedience, he is distinctly one of the tribesmen, the leading member of a family which has won its headship through military prowess. Lower down he often belongs to an entirely separate caste, and comes from a different stock to the tribesmen. The large tribes are divided into sections, and in different tribes we find many sections with the same names. This points to the fact that the sections represent the original owners of the soil, while the present chiefs belong to powerful families who have invaded their domains and seized their lands. This is notably the case with the Dizai where nearly all the land belongs to one powerful family, against which a few old tribal Aghas and headmen still maintain an unequal struggle. Here the chief is a landlord, and the system that prevails is feudal rather than tribal.

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The statement that in the foothill and plains area the Aghas are frequently of different stock to their villagers is valid and has already been commented upon in Chapter 1. The idea that the taifas "represent the original owners of the soil", while the paramount tribal Aghas are conquering overlords is mere fantasy; while as for the Dizai the facts seem to be that the tribe itself is "all one family" (taifa) while the land is mostly held by town dwelling landlords who have no kinship affiliations with the Dizai at all. While this lineage distinction between Agha and tenant is valid for the plains area, it does not apply to the tribal districts. The following for instance is quite absurb:-

> (Hay, p. 42) In the bigger tribes the Aghas, whose families have for many generations been entirely disassociated from manual labour, are of a far finer type than the peasants.

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

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Such generalisations may lead to some startling sociological conclusions:-

> (p.221) This village (Merga; Map 2) lies just below Sheikh Mohammad Agha's residence (Walash) in the Balik country, and its inhabitants, some fifty families in number, are nearly all his relations. Being of 'chiefly' descent they consider it beneath their dignity to cultivate the soil; they have therefore only two means of livelihood, sponging on Sheikh Mohammad Agha who pays them most of his salary to keep them quiet, and looting and taking toll from the caravans that pass along the Persian Road.

This paragraph I consider most illuminating. For it is precisely on the basis of such evidence that the British policy of 'military pacification' is carried out on all the outlying frontiers of Empire. The tribesmen just beyond the border are always, it seems, "desperate bandits and brigands" intent on plundering the innocent peasantry within the jurisdiction of the British raj. Hay of course does not intentionally deceive. He had only seen Merga from afar and was merely recording the position as outlined to him by Sheikh Mohammad. In giving this account however Sheikh Mohammad was fairly obviously blackmailing the British Administrator for more money, and was probably himself responsible for the particular piece of brigandage complained of. Merga today has one of the most extensive cultivations of the whole district, and is considered a prosperous village. There seems no reason to suppose that the position was radically different in 1920, even though the ravages of war had temporarily disorganised the agricultural arrangements of the whole area.

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This is not special pleading on behalf of the villagers of Merga or of the Kurds in general, but it is time that their nefarious activities were seen in proper proportion. It must be admitted that prior to the establishment of an external Authority most Kurdish tribes freely resorted to brigandage on every possible occasion. It was a socially approved aspect of inter-tribal life and one upon which the Kurds themselves lay great emphasis in folk tale and tradition. But it is this very emphasis that has led to the fabulous distortions that appear in all accounts of Kurdish life either lay or official. To read the literature one must suppose that in former times the majority of Kurdish communities lived solely on the proceeds of plunder and ransom; and while the Government continues its present policy of cultural suppression such fallacies are obviously convenient. But the unbiased observer cannot avoid the conclusion that most of the more spectacular exploits of Kurdish brigandage are products of the Kurds' own imagination. Seen in their proper scale these warlike activities can never have been more than an exciting gloss upon the normal balanced cycle of agricultural economics.

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

CHAPTER 6

The Limitations of the Foregoing Material

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The reader may have noted a serious defect in the samples of evidence offered to support my generalisations. In nearly every case the authority quoted is either an Agha or a near relative of an Agha. It may reasonably be queried whether, - if all my informants had been commoners, - the same general picture of the social organisation would have emerged.

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The reasons for limiting my enquiry to Agha sources were strictly practical ones. I was the first Englishman for some years to approach the district without some form of military protection, and since it was assumed that I must necessarily be a secret agent of the former mandatory power I was naturally the object of considerable curiosity and suspicion. The high policy that caused Britain to establish Iraq as an independent state is incomprehensible to the Kurdish tribesmen, and it is assumed that Kurdistan is somehow an important bone of contention between the English and the Arabs. Accordingly though I travelled with an official pass from the Ministry of the Interior, it was generally assumed that in some mysterious way I was plotting against the Government; my curiosity concerning the intimate details of Kurdish life was regarded as a cloak with which to hide my subtler designs. This put my Agha hosts in an awkward position. Obligations of hospitality compelled them to treat me as an honoured guest, and if my coming implied, as was rumoured, 'that the English were coming back', then certainly they would be well advised to treat me well. On the other hand if I was really an enemy of the Arabs, any undue familiarity with me would surely lead to a relentless grilling at the hands of the police as soon as I had left. And there were further complications - Hamid Agha of Barzala cautioned my interpreter that he had not slept a wink throughout my stay. As he saw it, I was in mortal danger. This was a golden chance for his enemies - they had only to bump me off and it would be he that would get in disgrace with the Government! Accordingly four armed sentries were posted round my bed every night.

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In this complex web of intrigue and distrust it is understandable that the Aghas, though willing enough that I should discuss village affairs with them personally, were extremely suspicious of anything that I might attempt to discover without their knowledge. Accordingly, since I believed at the time that I would be returning to the area later for more intensive study, I made little attempt to confirm the Agha's description of affairs by means of check interviews with commoners. This fact must be borne in mind by anyone using this monograph as a basis for further research. Even where the facts as described by me seem to be confirmed by further enquiry, it will be necessary to round the statement off by an analysis of the position as seen from the commoner's point of view.

9: Roosevelt G-5 (1946-1947) 1947 MA11 Kurd MA11
Mahabad

THE
MIDDLE EAST
JOURNAL

VOLUME I JULY 1947 NUMBER 3

THE KURDISH REPUBLIC OF MAHABAD

Archie Roosevelt, Jr.

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THE DREAM of Kurdish nationalists, an independent Kurdistan, was realized on a miniature scale in Iran from December 1945 to December 1946. The origin of the little Kurdish Republic, its brief and stormy history, and its sudden collapse is one of the more illuminating stories of the contemporary Middle East. Its strangely discordant themes of tribal warfare, rival imperialisms and social systems, medieval chivalry and idealistic nationalism well illustrate the complexity of the Kurdish picture, involving as it does a people never united and now split among five nations, none of which is sympathetic to Kurdish nationalist aspirations.

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v ARCHIE ROOSEVELT, JR., served as Assistant Military Attaché in Tehran from March 1946 to February 1947. During this period he made a special study of the Kurdish situation and was one of four Americans to visit Mahabad during the brief existence of the Kurdish Republic.

10:Johnson G-3 (no date) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Iraq

The Kurds of Iraq. I

by Squadron-Leader J. C. A. JOHNSON

How the Kurds are changing their ways and beginning to take their place in the modern world is the subject of this and a subsequent article. The verdict of history has been unkind to the Kurds, but, in common with the comparatively few other foreign observers who have visited them and known them individually, Squadron-Leader Johnson is favourably impressed with their intelligence and adaptability and fully recognizes the natural handicaps, notably lack of education, which have hitherto retarded their progress

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11:Johnson G-3 (no date) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Iraq

The Kurds of Iraq. II

by Squadron-Leader J. C. A. JOHNSON

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In the second of his two articles on the Kurds, Squadron-Leader Johnson explains how pressure of circumstance is forcing these essentially nomadic people to abandon their wandering life and adjust themselves to a world in which only those whose habits do not bring them into conflict with the machinery of constitutional government can prosper. He also explains his reasons for thinking that the Kurds are by nature qualified, in favourable circumstances, to exercise increasing influence on the progress of the young Iraqi state

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